

Role of Cal/EPA Environmental Justice Advisory Committee (CEJAC)

Adopted by Cal/EPA IWG on October 24, 2005

Background

Cal/EPA established the Environmental Justice Advisory Committee (CEJAC) in December 2001, as mandated by the passage of Senate Bill 89 (Escutia, 2000). Public Resources Code section 71114 requires the CEJAC to assist by "...providing recommendations and information to, and serving as a resource for..." the Secretary of Cal/EPA and Interagency Working Group on Environmental Justice (IWG) in establishing and implementing an intra-agency strategy to achieve environmental justice. Currently, CEJAC has 17-members representing local or regional land use planning agencies; air districts; certified unified program agencies (CUPAs); environmental organizations; business (large and small business); community organizations; environmental justice organizations; and a federally-recognized Tribe; and reflect the diversity seen in the state.

The CEJAC held many workshops and meetings in a two year process throughout the state to listen and understand the perspectives on environmental justice (EJ) from different segments of the society. In October 2003, the CEJAC submitted its comprehensive Environmental Justice Recommendations Report to the IWG. After the Agency's review of this report, Cal/EPA developed in 2004 its two-pathway approach- the EJ Strategy, a formal, process mandated by statute, and the EJ action plan, a short-term action-oriented process, to address EJ issues. Cal/EPA Secretary Lloyd, recognizing the role of CEJAC in advancing Cal/EPA forward on the issue of environmental justice, committed to quarterly CEJAC meetings.

Furthermore, in the Cal/EPA Intra-agency Environmental Justice Strategy, the Agency asserts it will "...engage the Advisory Committee on Environmental Justice and other EJ stakeholders in the implementation of this strategy to identify and address any gaps in existing programs, policies or activities that may impede the achievement of environmental justice. To ensure intra-agency coordination, BDO-specific environmental justice strategies, work plans, and related implementation documents will be reviewed by the IWG, with input and recommendations from Advisory Committee members, before they are finalized." The Agency also affirms that it will work with CEJAC, "...to provide public input to the IWG on staff's findings and recommendations during each of the five implementation phases" of the EJ Action Plan. Cal/EPA will seek input from the CEJAC, from the basis of its *October 2003 Final EJ Recommendations Report to the IWG* and all other formal CEJAC recommendations.

Specific CEJAC Role

Thus, the CEJAC will serve as a forum to gather public input and enhance public participation in Cal/EPA's Environmental Justice Program, in particular, with stakeholders not historically represented. The CEJAC will not serve as an appellate body of Cal/EPA. The CEJAC will provide independent review, comments, and recommendations to the Cal/EPA Secretary and the IWG regarding the following key activities, but not limited to:

- Implementation and evaluation of Cal/EPA's EJ Strategy and Action Plan in consideration of the CEJAC's 2003 Recommendations Report;
- Incorporation of risk reduction, pollution reduction and prevention, and precautionary approach concepts into the existing scientific and regulatory paradigm within Cal/EPA;
- Identification of obstacles in implementing CEJAC recommendations and policy options to remove those obstacles administratively and/or legislatively;
- Assistance in enhancing participation of all races, cultures, and income levels including minority populations and low-income communities in Cal/EPA's decision making process;
- Development of assessment tools and strategies to reduce cumulative exposures and impacts; and
- Identifying financial and technical resources to assist EJ efforts consistent with state law